

REMARKS

Applicant amended the specification to provide the identification of the referenced patent application serial number. Applicant canceled claim 95, amended claims 96, 136 and 140, and added new claims 142-145. Claims 1-94 were previously canceled. Claims 96-145 remain pending in this application.

Applicant appreciates the courtesy of a telephonic interview with the Examiner on March 1, 2005. At the interview, the prior art cited and applied in the Office Action were discussed in relation to some of the pending broad claims. In particular, the Examiner agreed in principle that language similar to the currently amended claim 96 would distinguish over the crimp-type sleeve structure in the Karlovich patent, and that the Karlovich patent does not teach a ferrule comprising a first ferrule half and a second ferrule half, and further that it would not be obvious to combine the Ochiai patent and the Lessar patent to render obvious the stamped metal ferrule body structure recited in claim 96 as well as other claims that have been rejected based on Ochiai and Lessar.

Accordingly, claim 96 as amended is now patentable over the prior art of record. All the previously presented dependent claims should also be patentable. Applicant respectfully requests rejoining and reconsidering the previously presented but withdrawn claims, in view of allowable generic claim 96.

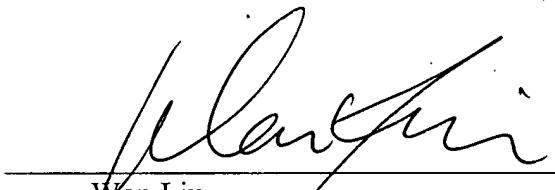
Applicant adds new claims 142-145 to round out the coverage of the present invention. These new claims are readable on the earlier elected species, and should be patentable over the cited and applied prior art. Specifically, none of the references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest the structure recited in the new claims.

Please enter the continuation data as amended on page 1 of the application.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the foregoing, Applicant submits that the claims pending in this application are patentable over the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed in this response.**

Respectfully submitted,



Wen Liu
Registration No. 32,822

LIU & LIU
811 W. Seventh Street; Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: (213) 830-5743
Facsimile: (213) 830-5741

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